



Pac-Man Kills Kids, Self: Video Horrors

In their efforts to pick the pockets of America's youth, video game designers are getting increasingly whacked out. The video game market has become a veritable house of horrors. Consider these recent additions to the computerized game bazaar:

- "Communist Mutants from Space" (Starpath). The object of this game is to keep the Earth safe for democracy and the free-enterprise system as swarms of Marxists from the planet "Rooskee" attack our planet. Commie mutants, hatched from a Mother Creature filled with irradiated vodka, try to enslave the planet. This one seems like something dredged up from the musty recesses of Cap Weinberger's cerebrum.

- "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" (Wizard Video Games). Find Pac-Man too tame? Try what the promoters proudly bill as the "first violent video game." They promise you'll get to "know the pleasures of total destruction" as you "play the part of the vengeful Leatherface, or an innocent victim looking for safety." If you tire of chainsaw massacres, you can play "Halloween" (Wizard) or a host of

other gore games that are now or will soon be available.

- "Fast Food" (Telesys). Satisfy your urge to binge with a giant mouth that gobbles milkshakes, cans of soda, french fries, hamburgers, ice cream and pizzas. As the difficulty level increases, hamburger buns fly across the screen at supersonic speeds. The more junk food you scarf down, the fatter you get and the higher you score.

- "Custer's Revenge" (American Multiple Industries). A helpless but smiling

Indian "squaw" tied to a post is sexually assaulted by General Custer after he fights off arrows and prickly cacti. Ads promise: "When you score, you score." The game, which was denounced by Women Against Pornography for making "rape a game," is no longer in circulation, but the company still offers such titles as "Bachelor Party" and "Beat 'Em and Eat 'Em."

- "Asylum" (Med Systems Software). If these games are starting to drive you crazy, try not to get committed to

Asylum's mental hospital. As a patient, your goal is to escape other crazed inmates, sadistic guards and evil doctors. An ax murderer is thrown in to give the game a little added tension.

By now you are probably thinking of confiscating Junior's quarters, but keep in mind that afternoons in the video arcade do not have to be unrelievedly sociopathic. Your kid can also play politically correct games like "Joust" (Williams Electronics), in which a player gets bonus points for protecting his or her coplayer. —Louis Freedberg